Study on Problems Related To Library Automation in India

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Abstract – From the user point of view cataloguing system is most important and also forms the base for other library activities. Keeping these two points in view UNESCO developed a PC based software titled 'CDS/ISIS' and is available at a very nominal price to all the libraries in developing countries. For details librarians may contact ATIRA/NISSAT. This software can export data in ISO 2709 format and therefore at later stage if one decides to go in for some other software, data transfer poses no problem. INFLIBNET has developed public domain library software titled 'ILMS' which is available on DOS AND UNIX platform. With the recent government policy the PCs and other accessories have become affordable. The in-house training for handling the software is usually provided by the developers and one can choose the software which can suit their budget. However, training for CDS/ISIS is available at INSDOC, INFLIBNET and DRTC. For further information on training programmes one can contact NISSAT. The training of library staff also depends on the level of automation. If one decides to go only for cataloguing a minimum training of one or two week's duration will enable the librarians to develop a database and maintain it. With this basic training one can easily transfer the same data on a server/main machine in a network environment. The job becomes easy as most of the institutions have systems department with computer professionals maintaining the network.

Key Words: Software, Public Domain, Information, Computer Professionals.

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INTRODUCTION

In the information age, success lies in the innovative application of information technology and gaining access to digital resources. Fortunately, although little late, majority of the university libraries in India has adopted state-of-the-art information technology for making the library and information services faster and effective. The automation of university libraries has gone a long way in providing quality service and facilitating easy access to varied information sources cutting across space and time. Adoption of IT has not only saved the time of scholars, it also widened the access base of information sources. In this context, the valuable support given by University Grants Commission (UGC) and Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Center is quite noteworthy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Barriers of library automation:

- Following could be the few possible barriers of library automation:
- Fear of adverse impact on employment
- Apprehension that the technology could be too expensive
- The library staff has to undergo extensive training.
- Lack of support from the management, may be owing to budget constraints
- Fifth reason could be retrospective conversion of data.

If we analyze the various jobs such as book acquisition, technical processing, circulation and reference service one can conclude that human interference is necessary at each and every step. The only area where substantial manpower can be saved is the cataloguing. The data entered at the time of ordering can be used for cataloging with some updation would eliminate multiple card preparation and

subsequent filing. The manpower thus saved can be utilized in retrospective conversion and later on for analytical cataloguing or introducing new services. Therefore, there will be no adverse impact on employment. There is an apprehension that the technology, both hardware and software would be expensive and unaffordable. The cost of hardware and software depends on the level of automation. From the user point of view cataloguing system is most important and also forms the base for other library activities. Keeping these two points in view UNESCO developed a PC based software titled 'CDS/ISIS' and is available at a very nominal price to all the libraries in developing countries. For details librarians may contact ATIRA/NISSAT.

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

This software which works on a simple IBM compatible PC/XT is also available on UNIX and NOVELL platform. Recently the WINDOWS version has also been released. This software can export data in ISO 2709 format and therefore at later stage if one decides to go in for some other software, data transfer poses no problem. INFLIBNET has developed public domain library software titled 'ILMS' which is available on DOS AND UNIX platform. With the recent government policy the PCs and other accessories have become affordable. The in-house training for handling the software is usually provided by the developers and one can choose the software which can suit their budget. However, training for CDS/ISIS is available at INSDOC, INFLIBNET and DRTC. For further information on training programmes one can contact NISSAT. The training of library staff also depends on the level of automation. If one decides to go only for cataloguing a minimum training of one or two week's duration will enable the librarians to develop a database and maintain it. With this basic training one can easily transfer the same data on a server/main machine in a network environment. The job becomes easy as most of the institutions have systems department with computer professionals maintaining the network.

Fourthly lack of support from the management, may be owing to budget constraints, will be one of the barriers. Here the role of librarians becomes crucial in convincing the management that the users of libraries will also be the major beneficiaries of automation. Also, the skill and initiative play a major role in convincing the management.

The fifth reason could be retrospective conversion of data. As mentioned earlier the manpower saved could be utilized for retrospective conversion and later on for analytical cataloguing. However, most of the libraries have taken time bound project for this purpose.

PRE-REQUISITES

There have always been some pre-requisites for the execution and implementation of any project. Similarly, for any small or big library, following are some of the basic requirements of library automation:

- Finance
- Hardware
- Library Maintenance Software 4. Motivation of library staff
- Your own willingness

In addition to the above, there are many factors associated with such kinds of projects like overall work Environment: support of the Principal, Library Committee and its Convener: Faculty Members and other staff members particularly Library. Re-engineering is not about reducing staff, but rather it is the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of library process to achieve dramatic improvement in critical measures of performance, such as COST, QUALITY, SERVICE, SPEED and BETTER CONTROL than with previous systems.

Planning for an automated system, no matter how big or small, should be part of an overall long-range plan for the library. Automation should always be used as a means to achieve overall better patron service. Careful planning for technology will assure that your automation project is "sustainable", I.e. enhances the organizations ability to meet its services mission without disrupting the organizational stability of the institution. Planning for library automation has been defined as planning for "integrated system" that computerizes of traditional library functions using a common database. While this is still generally true, rapid technological change is forcing a reexamination of what it means to "automate the library" As physical, spatial and temporal barriers to acquiring information are crumbling, libraries must plan for a broader and more comprehensive approach to providing automated services.

PLANNING:

1. Strengths (What the Library currently does well.):

- The present scenario of library worldwide is. Vastly expanded storage of indexes, statistical databases, and document databases within the library;
- Full-text storage of documents, complete with full-text keyword searching and on demand printing;

❖ Access by users to library databases from home or office, with direct downloading of information and text on demand;

❖ The ability to access remote databases across the country and the world, and to download information and text on demand;

❖ Storage of pictorial and graphic material; and,

❖ Availability of "intelligent systems" providing transparent, one-step searching and access to various library in-house and remote databases.

2. Weakness (What the library current problems):

Even though this question seems to be very fundamental it is essential to emphasize this aspect, as the library automation is yet to take off in majority of the Indian libraries. Secondly, while justifying need for library automation more than cost effectiveness the benefits derived by the library users become the major consideration. To appreciate the advantages it becomes necessary to highlight the different levels of library automation. Following are considered as important factors for Library Automation:

❖ Advances in the computer and communication technology

❖ Wastage of users/staff time in locating the information

❖ Provide wide access to resources within the libraries and elsewhere

❖ Better access

❖ Information explosion

❖ Increase in the collection of libraries

❖ Inability of users to explore the unlimited literature and information of their interest

❖ Quality in service

❖ Cooperative efforts (Resource Sharing)

CONCLUSION:

Opportunities (forecast future possibilities in terms of services not technology that will benefit the library):

These capabilities and far more have become reality. Accordingly, toady's integrated system must not only provide access to the traditional cataloging, circulation, public catalog (OPAC) and acquisitions modules, but must be capable of connecting through the local system into the systems of other vendors, remote bibliographic ASPECT databases, CDROM drives on a local area network (LAN) and the Internet. Users are expecting that their library systems be capable of, among other things:

❖ Providing seamless integration between system gateway and OPAC modules;

❖ Providing access for external users on the internet to the library's OPAC; Monitoring the usage of remote databases that have been accessed through the gateway; and,

Accessing the Internet using a variety of graphical interfaces.